

THE EDITOR

What is Civilization? I answer, the power of good women.—EMERSON.

QUEEN VICTORIA during her reign of sixty-four years gave to the world a wonderful demonstration of the truth of Emerson's idea of civilization. It was the influence of the good woman that made her reign powerful. Kindliness, sincerity, constancy, and truth governed every action of her life, whether as ruler, wife, or mother, and it was those simple womanly attributes that so endeared her to the English people and commanded the veneration of the civilized world.

IN his message to the Legislature of New York Governor Odell made the recommendation that a single salaried officer should be appointed to perform the work now in the hands of the State Board of Charities.

A meeting of representatives of the charitable societies and institutions of New York City was held in the Assembly Hall of the United Charities Building, on January 23, 1901, to consider this proposed reorganization. There were present at this meeting representatives of every important charitable organization in the city of New York, men and women whose names stand for earnest, conscientious work, and whose interest in the charities of the State is entirely non-partisan.

Mr. R. Fulton Cutting, president of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, presided. Among the speakers were Professor George F. Canfield, president of the State Charities Aid Association; Professor Felix Adler, Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell, Rev. D. J. McMahon, D.D., supervisor of Catholic Charities of New York; Dr. Lee K. Frankel, manager of the United Hebrew Charities; Mr. William C. Kellogg, president of the Brooklyn Children's Aid Society, and Mr. Nathan Bijur, of the United Hebrew Charities.

The sentiment was unanimous that a single Commissioner of Charities, as proposed by the Governor, could not satisfactorily perform the duties of the present board of twelve members. This proposed change has been most emphatically denounced by the clergy and by the press, and the voice of the people would seem to be against it.

There is a side to this question which is of special interest to the

nurses of New York State, independently of their interest as citizens in the good management of its charities. The proposed change means practically that all the charitable institutions, which includes hospitals, will be put under political control. Such control would endanger the best interests of the hospitals, and whatever affects the welfare of the hospital has a direct influence upon the welfare of the nurse.

We most emphatically indorse every protest which has been made in disapproval of this proposed reorganization.

MISS NUTTING'S very able article on "Preliminary Training," which closes a series of three papers on this subject in the Educational Department, shows very conclusively the defects in the present system of training and the advantages of preliminary instruction, as has been demonstrated in the Glasgow Infirmary and London Hospital, but she has not suggested any practical manner in which such a plan can be worked out in the hospitals of the United States. We doubt if the managers of many of our leading hospitals would be willing to meet the full expense necessary for such preliminary training, and we have not yet reached the point in this country where women expect to give a money compensation in addition to the hard manual labor which is involved in gaining hospital experience. We believe that the plan suggested in this department of the October number of the *JOURNAL* might be made successful in any one of our large nursing centres, either New York, Boston, or Chicago. A number of Training-School Boards, assisted, perhaps, by a few liberally inclined people interested in nursing, might unite in establishing a preparatory school entirely outside of the hospitals, charging the pupils a moderate fee which would, at least in a measure, defray the cost of maintenance. Pupils could be prepared from this central school for any number of hospitals which would agree upon a uniform standard of admission. There has been some consideration of a school of this kind in Boston, but we have not heard that it is yet taking form. When we shall have reached some such plan of training, which will give a uniform standard of admission, and shall have gained State registration, we shall have made great progress in nursing standards.

Miss Dolliver, at the Massachusetts General Hospital, is working on quite original lines in the training of probationers, although she makes no claim to a preliminary course. We hope to give her plan in another number.

DURING the week that the *JOURNAL* went to press for the February number our own city was visited by a most heart-breaking calamity, the burning of the Rochester Orphan Asylum. This misfortune was brought

very close to us, as one of our own workingwomen lost a child in the fire, and as many of the children who escaped uninjured were brought to us for shelter, while we shared with the other hospitals of the city in the care of the comparatively small number of those who were burned or otherwise injured.

The agony of mind of the friends who were searching for their children, not knowing whether they were alive or dead, was something never to be forgotten.

Of the thirty lives that were lost, it was proven that only a very few of the number were actually burned by the fire, the others having been overcome by the smoke, which was carried rapidly through the building by means of the ventilating shafts. The details of this accident were so generally circulated through the press that it is not necessary to dwell upon them here. Such accidents come as a terrible warning to the officers of institutions, who are responsible for the lives of helpless people. It is the duty of the Board of Managers or proprietors of the building to see that the proper means of fire protection and escape is provided. It is the duty of the officer in charge to know that systematic and conscientious supervision against fire is maintained day and night, and that the working force is properly instructed in what to do in case of fire.

In our own hospital a fire lecture is given to each class of nurses, at which all of the employees are present, and the subject is gone over carefully with special reference to the arrangement of this hospital, with the possible chance of having to carry out helpless patients. Means of egress from the different sections of the building are dwelt upon, and the lecture ends with a demonstration in which the nurses are taught how to lift and carry helpless people, with special instruction in the treatment of those overcome by smoke. We are promised this lecture, with illustrations, for a later number of the JOURNAL, and we would like to ask those superintendents who have a regular fire drill established in their hospitals to send us copies of their printed regulations.

THE announcement is made in another column that the committee having the New York State meeting in charge expect to call the general meeting in March. We hope for two reasons the committee will postpone their plans at least a month. The winter has been so unusually severe for nurses that we doubt if many could arrange to be present at that time, and we think, having delayed the matter so long, there should be ample time allowed to announce the plan and programme in *all* of the nursing journals.

This meeting of the New York State nurses to organize a State

association having for its motive registration will mark an era in nursing history. The step should be taken carefully, deliberately, and with dignity, realizing that the entire nursing world is watching every movement. A strong, harmonious organization of the nurses of New York State means progress the world over.

WITH the March number, *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* celebrates its first semi-annual birthday. To be half a year old, to have been declared a success professionally, to be paying our way financially, and to have made such a host of friends, we consider to be an occasion for congratulation. Still, we ask for the continued coöperation of the alumnae members in increasing the circulation of the *JOURNAL* and in sending contributions to its pages. It is generally understood that the entire editorial staff give their services gratuitously this first year, and only those engaged in it can appreciate the work the enterprise involves. It is not to be expected that these few women will be able to give their time and labor indefinitely for purely professional motives, and before the end of the year our subscription list must at least be doubled, that we may enter upon the second year with an income that will place the magazine upon a firm business basis.

We do not claim perfection for the *JOURNAL*, but the development of such an enterprise must necessarily be slow. The "New Drugs" department comes into line with the present number, in charge of an able man, who is a physician, and has also been a practical druggist. The "Food" department will be organized before the year closes, and that of "Book Reviews" more perfectly arranged. It is our aim to make the advertising sheets reliable reference pages.

Miss Hibbard's very interesting articles, "With the Maine to South Africa," will continue through several numbers. The series of papers (beginning with the present number) on "The Feeding of Children" will be of especial interest, as the subject will be considered with reference to the school age.

The papers on "Contagion and Disinfection" will appear at an early date, and promise to be most interesting and valuable. This subject will be considered from the stand-point of the city, town, school, hospital, home, and prison.

To all who have given material assistance, and to those who have sent kind words of encouragement and cheer, the editors make their grateful acknowledgments.